

II. Remarks

Claims 19 and 20 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 1-18 and 21-29 remain pending in the present application and are believed to distinguish patentably over the prior art.

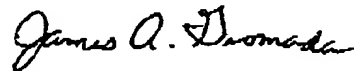
In the Office Action, Claims 1 to 29 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being allegedly anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,636,889 to Estrada, et al. ("Estrada"). As described at pages 2-11 of the Office Action, it is alleged that the Applicant's invention as defined by these claims is clearly disclosed by Estrada. Applicant respectfully submits that this objection in view of Estrada is no longer appropriate.

Applicant respectfully submits that the Estrada reference is not citable as prior art against the present application. Applicant conceived and diligently reduced to practice the invention defined by Claims 1-18 and 21-29 prior to the January 4, 2000 filing date of Estrada. Applicant encloses herewith, a Declaration pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.131 executed by inventor Taco van Ieperen. In view of this Declaration, Applicant respectfully requests that all rejections of the claims based on Estrada be withdrawn.

In view of the above, it is believed the application is in order for allowance and action to that end is respectfully requested.

Applicant's attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 625-3500. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address given below.

Respectfully submitted,



Attorney for Applicant
James A. Gromada
Registration No. 44,727

Patent Administrator
KATTEN MUCHIN ROSENMAN L.L.P.
525 West Monroe Street
Chicago, Illinois 60611-3693